

Media, PA — With gas prices steadily increasing, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7) held a roundtable discussion today on actions being taken in Congress to address prices, reduce dependency on oil, and expand the use of alternative energy sources.

Meeting in the Media Theatre for Performing Arts, a building partially powered with locally produced solar panels, Congressman Sestak was joined by constituents, elected leaders, local environmentalists and alternative energy experts. In addition to discussing his actions to reduce prices in the short term and move toward alternative fuels in the long term, the roundtable allowed Congressman Sestak to speak with those who see firsthand how energy prices are affecting consumers and businesses and how businesses are responding to the demand for alternative energies.

In a continuing effort to combat rising gasoline prices, Congressman Joe Sestak voted twice this week in favor of bills he cosponsored.

“I supported the Price Gouging bill because gas prices are rising steadily and I want to ensure that consumers will not be taken advantage of. This bill is focused on ensuring that gas prices do not unfairly rise on the backs of our citizens while at the same time we move to reduce dependency on oil and cut greenhouse gases,” said Congressman Sestak. “Because of this, I also voted for a bill called “No Oil Producing & Exporting Cartels” or NOPEC this week to help stop oil cartels from driving up prices.”

The “Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act” – H.R. 1252 - makes it unlawful for any person to sell crude oil, gasoline, natural gas, or petroleum distillates at a price that is unconscionably excessive or indicates the seller is taking unfair advantage unusual market conditions or the circumstances of an emergency to increase prices unreasonably.

It would also become unlawful to intentionally report false price information concerning wholesale prices of such products and manipulate the market regarding the purchase or sale at wholesale of products.

The legislation sets civil and criminal penalties for price gouging and empowers the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and State Attorneys General to enforce the Act. Fines and penalties collected under this Act will be deposited in a separate fund in the treasury to be known as the Consumer Relief Trust Fund to provide assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) administered by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The “No Oil Producing & Exporting Cartels” or NOPEC would empower the federal government to file antitrust lawsuits in federal district court against countries that collectively set prices for natural gas or petroleum. Specifically, countries could not work collectively to:

- limit the production or distribution of oil, natural gas or petroleum products;
- set the prices of oil, natural gas, or petroleum products; or
- take additional steps that would directly or substantially affect the “market, supply, price, or distribution” of oil, natural gas, or petroleum products.

Congressman Sestak also has been a strong supporter of U.S. energy self-sufficiency to

address the issues of gas prices and increased energy independence.. He has cosponsored a number of bills including:

- H.R. 550 would make investments in clean, alternative energy tax deductible.
- H.R. 1506 would raise fuel efficiency standards for all cars and light trucks.
- H.R. 620 reduces greenhouse gas emissions by creating a market-driven system of tradable emission allowances.
- H.R. 39 would protect the Arctic Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling.

In addition, Congressman Sestak recently cosponsored and voted for H.R. 6 which would repeal \$14 billion in subsidies to Big Oil and shift the resources to invest in clean, alternative energy. This bill passed and has been sent to the Senate for consideration. Congressman Sestak also supported the Senate Concurrent Resolution 21, which placed a high priority on tackling global warming and making America more energy independent.

“For our economic, environmental, and security well-being, we must reduce our national dependency on petroleum products,” said Congressman Sestak. “Global warming and our addiction to oil are some of the greatest challenges of our time. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now.”

Congressman Sestak’s has already supported legislation on many of his top environmental and energy priorities:

1. Support the signing of the Kyoto Treaty to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 620 and 1590.
2. Raise fuel economy standards on automobiles to at least 35-40 mpg. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 1506.
3. Set 10 percent target for renewable energy and an ultimate target of 20 percent. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 969.
4. Invest in alternative technologies such as fuel cells and bio-diesel. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 547.
5. Strengthen “tailpipe emissions” standards. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 1506.
6. Encourage energy conservation by restoring tax incentives for energy efficient vehicles and equipment
7. Create an advanced research agency to produce new technologies that will reduce oil consumption, strengthen energy efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
8. Offer tax incentives to businesses that utilize alternative fuels and other clean energy technologies rather than offering tax breaks to big oil companies. Congressman Sestak supports H.R.6 and 550
9. Invest in infrastructure for E85 – a fuel blend that’s 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline and scarcely offered at service stations due to the high costs to mom and pop station owners to install the equipment

10. Ensure that our government has the ability to enforce responsible clean air and water regulations. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 720.

11. Prohibit drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Congressman Sestak supports H.R. 39

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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